

Message Text

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R 161110Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BISSAU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1156
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR POUCH
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRAIA POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 BISSAU 0556

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, PEPR, PINT, PU
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT CABRAL'S STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS TO
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

1. SUMMARY: GUINEA-BISSAU PRESIDENT LUIS CABRAL PRESENTED
STATE OF THE NATION REPORT TO THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
CURRENT POPULAR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON MAY 9, 1978. OB-
SERVERS AGREE THAT THE INTENT OF THE REPORT WAS FORMAL
CONFIRMATION OF THE LONG NOTICED DRIFT OF THE GOGB AWAY
FROM INTIMATE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET BLOC AND TOWARDS
A NEUTRAL STANCE INVOLVING CLOSE BI-AND MULTI-LATERAL
RELATIONS WITH THE WEST, NOTABLY PORTUGAL, THE USG, AND
THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY. TALKING FOR TEN HOURS
WITH A STRIKING ABSENCE OF IDEOLOGICAL RHETORIC, PRESI-
DENT CABRAL, IN EXHAUSTING DETAIL, REVIEWED ALL
ASPECTS OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL
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LIFE, PAINTING A PICTURE OF A GOVERNMENT ATTEMPT-
ING TO DEAL WITH THE WHOLE RANGE OF POOR COUNTRY
PROBLEMS WITH THE GENEROUS ASSISTANCE OF COUNTRIES WHO
HAD FORMERLY BEEN NEUTRAL OR ENEMIES DURING THE FIGHT
FOR INDEPENDENCE. IT WAS A SPEECH WHICH WOULD HAVE
BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TWO YEARS AGO. END SUMMARY.

2. WE AND OTHER OBSERVERS HAVE FOR SOMETIME BEEN REPORTING ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE GOGB'S IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE AWAY FROM VERY CLOSE TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION, CUBA, AND FRIENDS TOWARDS A CENTER OF THE ROAD, NON-ALIGNED, PROGRESSIVE THIRD WORLD STANCE. THIS TREND WAS CLEARLY IN EVIDENCE AT THE RULING PARTY'S THIRD PARTY CONGRESS LAST NOVEMBER (BISSAU A-17) WHEN THE PAIGC DELIBERATELY TURNED ITS FACE AWAY FROM THE MARXIST-LENINIST IDENTIFICATION CHOSEN BY ANGOLA'S MPLA AND MOZAMBIQUE'S FRELIMO. PRESIDENT CABRAL'S MOST RECENT SPEECH CONTINUED ALONG THAT PATH OF EVOLUTION, TO (ONE IS TEMPTED TO SAY) BEYOND THE POINT OF NO RETURN. WHEREAS THE THIRD PARTY CONGRESS WAS A HIGHLY PUBLICIZED INTERNATIONAL AFFAIR, REDOLENT WITH RHETORIC, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WAS PURELY LOCAL WITH CABRAL SPEAKING FORMALLY AS PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE OF THE GOGB. THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE THIRD PARTY CONGRESS AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAS BEEN ONE OF INCREASINGLY SEVERE PROBLEMS, WITH THE GOGB FEELING ITSELF OBLIGED TO ISSUE A CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL FOOD HELP (BISSAU 0050). THE WEST HAS BEEN RESPONSIVE, AND STRIKINGLY SO IN COMPARISON WITH A SOVIET BLOC BRUSHOFF. CABRAL'S TALK, REPORTEDLY WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, WAS A FORMAL STATEMENT OF APPRECIATION FOR THAT AID.

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3. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS THE PARTY CONGRESS. HOWEVER, WE HAVE LONG NOTED A SOMEWHAT MORE "MODERATE" TREND IN CAPE VERDE AND THE PARTY PRONOUNCEMENTS AT THE THIRD PARTY CONGRESS WERE PRESUMED TO BE A COMPROMISE WITH THE SOMEWHAT MORE "RADICAL" ATTITUDES PREVAILING IN GUINEA-BISSAU. PRESIDENT CABRAL'S SPEECH, HOWEVER, REQUIRES A REVISION OF THIS CONVENTIONAL VIEW AS THE PRESENT GOGB REVEALS ITSELF AS EQUALLY COMMITTED TO AN OPENING TO THE WEST.

4. THE FIRST MAJOR SUBJECT CABRAL BROACHED WAS THE ASSEMBLY ITSELF AND ITS TASKS IN THE PRESENT SESSION AND FOR THE COMING YEAR (THE ASSEMBLY HAS 147 MEMBERS AND MEETS NORMALLY ONCE ANNUALLY FOR ONE WEEK); (A) ACHIEVING NATIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOOD AND (B) BALANCING THE BUDGET. BOTH MUST BE ACHIEVED, SAID CABRAL, BY A NATIONAL DEVOTION

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TO HARD WORK, DISCIPLINE, AND A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY. HE CALLED THE FOOD SHORTAGE AS THE COUNTRY'S NUMBER ONE PROBLEM, AND LISTED THE VARIOUS AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS UNDERWAY OR BEING PLANNED TO ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY. HE DESCRIBED IN DETAIL THE USAID CONTUBOEL IRRIGATION PROJECT AND PRESENTED IT AS THE MODEL TO BE USED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY (CABRAL CAREFULLY AND DELIBERATELY EXPLAINED THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE USG. THE EARS OF THE INVITED DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY PICKED UP NOTICEABLY AT THIS DELIBERATE AND LAUDATORY MENTION OF WESTERN FOREIGN ASSISTANCE.)

5. IN EVEN MORE CLASSIC CONSERVATIVE PHRASES, CABRAL EXPLAINED THE COUNTRY'S SERIOUS FINANCIAL SITUATION AND CALLED FOR INTER ALIA, GREATER COMPLIANCE WITH TAX LEVIES.

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6. CABRAL THEN LAUNCHED INTO THE MAIN BODY OF HIS TALK,

WHICH CONSISTED OF A SEVEN OR MORE HOUR REVIEW OF THE COUNTRIES PROBLEMS AND PROGRAMS MINISTRY BY MINISTRY. IN SEVERAL CASES HE SPECIFICALLY CRITICIZED OR PRAISED THE RESPONSIBLE MINISTER, AND IN ALL CASES HE MENTIONED EVERY MAJOR PROJECT OR PROGRAM BEING PLANNED OR IMPLEMENTED BY THE RELEVANT MINISTRY. MORE STRIKING, IN EVERY CASE HE MENTIONED THE FOREIGN DONOR COUNTRY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE. AS THE LONG ROLL CALL WENT ON, THE PREDOMINANCE OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICA AID BECAME OBVIOUS, AND THE MENTION OF THE SOVIET UNION, EAST GERMANY, CUBA, ET AL. EMBARRASSINGLY RARE. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS BALANCE SHEET OF FOREIGN AID WAS UNDERLINED NEAR THE END WHEN CABRAL TALKED OF THE EMERGENCY FOOD AID BEING RECEIVED BY GUINEA-BISSAU (SEE BELOW).

7. A NUMBER OF PARTICULARLY INTERESTING SUBJECTS WERE RAISED DURING THE COURSE OF THE SPEECH, AS FOLLOWS:

8. FOREIGN TECHNICIANS: REVERSING GOGB SUSPICION OF FOREIGN TECHNICIANS AND VOLUNTEERS, EXCEPT THOSE WITH GOOD IDEOLOGICAL CREDENTIALS, CABRAL STATED THAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS AND APPRECIATES FOREIGN HELP. HE DESCRIBED THE "VICIOUS LIVING CONDITIONS" WHICH FOREIGN EXPERTS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO ENDURE AND GOVERNMENT PLANS TO BUILD HOUSING AND MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUCH EXPERTS.

9. FISHING SECTOR: CABRAL OPENED THIS SUBJECT BY
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REPORTING ON COOPERATION UNDERWAY WITH PORTUGAL THE USG, AND BRAZIL IN ARTESANAL FISHING PROGRAMS. HE DESCRIBED, AGAIN IN SOME DETAIL, THE PROJECTED USAID PROJECT IN THE CACHEU REGION. HE THEN RECOUNTED A RATHER SUBTLE SYMPHONY OF OBSERVATIONS ON THE LOCALLY SENSITIVE SUBJECT OF EXPLOITATION OF THE OFF-SHORE FISHERY RESOURCES. FIRST HE DISCUSSED THE JOINT SOVIET UNION/GUINEA-BISSAU FISHING COMPANY, DESCRIBING IT AS THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT EXERCISE OF ITS TYPE IN THE COUNTRY; IMPORTANT FOR GUINEA-BISSAU'S DEVELOPMENT. TURNING TO THE SIMILAR ALGERIAN-GUINEA-BISSAU MIXED FISHING COMPANY, HE CALLED IT A BUST AND ABANDONED, BEMOANING THE FIVE EXPENSIVE AND VALUABLE FISHING BOATS RUSTING AWAY IN BISSAU HARBOR (SOME OF THESE COMMENTS WERE IN CRIOULO AND CAUSED OUTBURSTS OF LAUGHTER FROM THE ASSEMBLED DEPUTIES).

HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NEGOTIATING WITH PORTUGAL, FRANCE AND OTHERS FOR NEW ARRANGEMENTS TO EXPLOIT THE SEA RICHES OF THE COUNTRY. HE THEN CAREFULLY EXPLAINED HOW THESE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WOULD PROTECT THE COUNTRY'S INTEREST BY ENSURING THAT THERE WOULD NO LONGER BE SALES OF GUINEA-BISSAU'S FISH IN EUROPE WHILE THE LOCAL MARKET WENT UNSUPPLIED. (THIS IS ONE OF THE MAJOR CAUSES OF LOCAL UNHAPPINESS WITH THE SOVIET OPERATION.) HE CONCLUDED BY ANNOUNCING THE CREATION OF A "COAST GUARD" EQUIPPED WITH PATROL BOATS AND AN AIRPLANE TO PROTECT THE COUNTRY'S MARITIME RIGHTS. (LOUD APPLAUSE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 4 BISSAU 0556

FROM THE AUDIENCE.) STATE SECRETARY FOR FISHERIES JOSEPH TURPIN CAME IN FOR MUCH PRAISE (MORE THAN ANY OTHER MEMBER OF GOVERNMENT) FOR HIS EFFORTS AND ACTIVITIES IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR. (SEE BISSAU 522 FOR DESCRIPTION OF NEW FISHING SURVEILLANCE SERVICE.)

10. SEA FRONTIERS: ANOTHER OBVIOUSLY POPULAR SUBJECT WITH THE DEPUTIES WAS THAT OF THE SEA BORDER DISPUTES WITH SENEGAL AND GUINEA-CONAKRY (SEE BISSAU 552). CABRAL BRIEFLY DESCRIBED THE PROBLEM DATING FROM

COLONIAL DAYS AND IN RINGING TONES PROMISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NEVER YIELD ANY OF GUINEA-BISSAU'S RIGHTS. (LOUD APPLAUSE) DESPITE THIS ALMOST JINGOIST PRONOUNCEMENT, CABRAL WENT ON TO DESCRIBE ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS WITH SENEGAL AND GUINEA-CONAKRY (BOTH OF WHOM WERE REFERRED TO IN THE WARMEST OF TERMS) AND STATED HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE GOOD WILL
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OF GUINEA-BISSAU'S NEIGHBORS TO RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW AND AFRICAN SOLIDARITY.

11. SECURITY AND DEFENSE FORCES: CABRAL'S DISCUSSION OF THE SECURITY AND DEFENSE FORCES SMACKED OF "HE THINKS HE DOTH PROTEST TOO MUCH". HE REFERRED TO A RECENT INCIDENT WHERE TWO SOLDIERS HARASSED A LONG-TIME PORTUGUESE RESIDENT AND THEN LAUNCHED INTO A PLEA FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN SECURITY AND DEFENSE PERSONNEL AND THE PUBLIC. HE PRAISED THE POLICE AND MILITARY FOR THEIR DEVOTION TO THE NATION AND THE PARTY, LAUDED THEIR VITAL ROLE, FERVENTLY PRAISED THEIR SENSE OF DEVOTION, DEDICATION AND DISCIPLINE AND CALLED FOR THE PEOPLE TO RESPECT AND HONOR THEM. HE EXPLAINED THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS OF CREATING AN APPROPRIATE AND AFFORDABLE DEFENSE FORCE, MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A FRONTIER FORCE, AND DESCRIBED NEW TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR THE POLICE (SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING CZECHOSLOVAKIAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE). INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, CABRAL DID NOT RPT NOT MENTION SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE; THIS OVERSIGHT BEING THE ONLY FOREIGN ASSISTANCE HE DID NOT NOTE.

12. ARMAZENS DO POVO CORRUPTION SCANDAL: IN A CLEAR EFFORT TO CLOSE THE BOOK ON THE POTENTIALLY POLITICALLY SENSITIVE SCANDAL INVOLVING FIDDLING AT THE STATE-OWNED TRADING COMPANY, ARMAZENS DO POVO (BISSAU 459), CABRAL EXPLAINED THE SITUATION AND THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS TO THE DEPUTIES. HE SAID IT WAS A DISGRACEFUL EVENT, BUT INVOLVED ONLY SMALL NUMBERS OF EMPLOYEES. HE PRAISED THE SECURITY FORCES FOR UNCOVERING
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THE CORRUPTION AND STATED THAT STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO DEAL WITH THE MALEFACTORS. CABRAL'S PRESENTATION

WAS A FOLLOW-UP TO A RECENT SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER WHICH INDICATED A POLITICAL DECISION TO HANDLE THE AFFAIR AS A PURE CRIME, AND TO LIMIT ANY POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS.

13. GOVERNMENT RADIO POLICY: CABRAL SEVERELY CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT-RUN RADIO FOR IRRESPONSIBLE STATEMENTS WHICH EMBARRASS THE GOVERNMENT. HE CHARGED THEM WITH THE NEED TO IMPROVE THEIR PROFESSIONALISM AND SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY. (PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD BY A RELIABLE GOVERNMENT CONTACT THAT PRESIDENT'S CRITICISM WAS RESULT OF MY COMPLAINT TO FOREIGN MINISTER ABOUT RECENT ANTI-AMERICAN PROGRAM ON RADIO. ACTUALLY I DID RECENTLY POINT OUT TO FOREIGN MINISTER THAT CURRENT CARTOON EXHIBITION IN GOVERNMENT CULTURAL CENTER IN HONOR OF UPCOMING HAVANA YOUTH CONFERENCE WAS ANTI-AMERICAN AND HARDLY APPROPRIATE PRESENTATION IN GOVERNMENT FACILITY. PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR'S SOURCE SAID PRESIDENT WAS FURIOUS ABOUT RADIO PROGRAM.)

14. FOREIGN AFFAIRS: CABRAL ELECTRIFIED THE BY NOW EXHAUSTED AUDIENCE (AT LEAST THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS COMPONENT) IN THE LAST HOUR WITH A REVIEW OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE ELABORATED ON WELL-KNOWN GOGG POSITIONS WITH A MIXTURE OF INTERESTING FLAT STATEMENTS (CANARY ISLANDS, AZORES, MADEIRA), SUBTLE

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

VARIATIONS (WESTERN SAHARA), NEW AFFIRMATIONS (NEW AID IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OLD FRIENDSHIPS), AND AN ALMOST SLOPPILY SENTIMENTAL DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC TIES WITH PORTUGAL, TO WIT:

A) GUINEA-BISSAU'S BASIC POLICY IS FRIENDSHIP WITH EVERYONE AND "COOPERATION WITH EVERY COUNTRY THAT RECOGNIZES GUINEA-BISSAU'S INDEPENDENCE".

B) STRONG SUPPORT FOR WEST AFRICAN REGIONALISM AND THE OAU. HE LAMENTED THAT THE UNITY WHICH EXISTED AMONG AFRICANS DURING THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE DAYS HAD BEEN DILUTED BY INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS OF INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND PLEADED FOR A RESUMPTION OF UNITY CONCENTRATED ON THE MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING AFRICA TODAY: SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND RHODESIA.

C) IN DISCUSSING GUINEA-BISSAU'S SUPPORT FOR LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, SOME INTERESTING SHIFTS AND QUALIFICATIONS APPEARED. WHILE EMPHASIZING CONTINUED UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT FOR SWAPO AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, HIS STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE PLO AND POLISARIO SEEMED TO LACK FIRE. WHILE REITERATING GUINEA-BISSAU'S SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PEOPLE OF WESTERN SAHARA, CABRAL ADDED A LONG SENTIMENTAL COMMENTARY ON GUINEA-BISSAU'S OLD FRIENDSHIP WITH MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA (AND PARTICULARLY FOR OULD DADDAH). HE DID NOT MENTION FRANCE OR SENEGAL WITH RESPECT TO THE SAHARA.

D) ELABORATING ON GOGB SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS, CABRAL EXPLAINED THAT SUCH SUPPORT IS DEPENDENT UPON THE EXISTENCE OF BOTH (A) A SITUATION OF COLONIALIZATION, AND (B) A TRUE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT. APPLYING THESE CRITERIA HE STATED THAT SUCH CONDITIONS DID NOT APPEAR TO EXIST NOW IN THE CANARY ISLANDS AND CERTAINLY DO NOT RPT NOT EXIST IN THE AZORES AND MADEIRA (SEE SEPTTEL).

E) GUINEA-BISSAU REMEMBERS WITH APPRECIATION ALL THOSE WHO HELPED IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE (NO NAMES MENTIONED) BUT THE PAST IS THE PAST AND INDEPENDENCE

MEANS A NEW SITUATION. THE COUNTRY FACES A SERIOUS
CRISIS - DROUGHT - AND IS DEEPLY APPRECIATIVE OF GENEROUS
HELP OFFERED BY MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY,
SPECIFICALLY SWEDEN, USA, EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY,
DENMARK, NORWAY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, UNDP, WORLD
FOOD ORGANIZATION. (I MAY HAVE BECOME OVER SENSITIZED BY
THESE CONTINUOUS REFERENCES TO U.S. AID, BUT IT SEEMED
TO ME CABRAL WAS ROLLING OUT THE FULL PHRASE - ESTADOS UNIDOS
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DA AMERICA - MOST DELIBERATELY.) HE EMPHASIZED THAT
EVEN SOME COUNTRIES WHOSE OWN CAPACITIES ARE LIMITED
HAVE SENT SMALL BUT SYMBOLIC FOOD CONTRIBUTIONS,
NAMELY PORTUGAL. SOVIET BLOC REMAINED CONSPICUOUSLY
UNMENTIONED.

F) TURNING TO THE SUBJECT OF PORTUGUESE/GUINEA-
BISSAU RELATIONS, CABRAL LET LOOSE WITH LATIN EXUBERANCE.
HE SAID HIS OWN STATE VISIT LAST JANUARY WAS "HISTORIC
VISIT" WHICH TURNED A PAGE IN HISTORY. "THE WAR IS OVER".
HE REPEATED THE AMILCAR CABRAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE
FORMER COLONIAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE,
SPOKE OF A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP AND OF HOW THE PORTUGUESE
PEOPLE'S SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OF GUINEA-BISSAU AND ITS PEOPLE
WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR PORTUGAL TO PLAY A SPECIAL
ROLE IN GUINEA-BISSAU DEVELOPMENT.

15. COMMENT: AS IS EVIDENT BY COMMENTS MADE ABOVE, I
BELIEVE THE TONE AND THRUST OF CABRAL'S SPEECH WERE
DELIBERATE. BY THE NOTING PREPONDERANCE OF WESTERN
AID AND THE CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WHICH HAVE
EVOLVED, CABRAL IS BOTH EXPRESSING HIS APPRECIATION
TO US AND THE WARNING THE SOVIETS AND OTHER OLD FRIENDS
THAT FRIENDSHIP IS A PLANT REQUIRING DAILY WATERING.
MARKS

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Type: TE
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